THE GUIDE

December 2010 | Issue 253 | theguide.greatbritishlife.co.uk

King of the Singers

WORLD-CLASS BARITONE CHRISTOPHER GABBITAS ON WORLD TOURS AND WEEKENDS IN GREENWICH

LIGHTS, SANTA, ACTION!

Greenwich Market launches its Christmas season

That festive feeling

Panto, carols, fairs and fetes – all on your doorstep!

In the PICTURE

The Great British Life photography competition London shortlist

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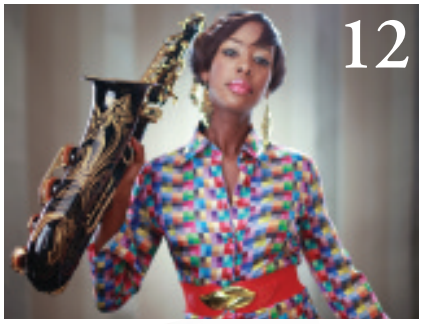

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Web exclusives

Online this month at theguide.greatbritishlife.co.uk

Always a much-anticipated event, the Blackheath Village lights will be switched on this year at 4.30pm on 4 December. Stand-up comedian Kevin Bridges will be doing the honours alongside the mayors of Lewisham and Greenwich. It'll be quite an event – find out more online!

We also have a gorgeous gift gallery of handmade bangles and headpieces by Gemma Bishop. Her kooky accessories are created using satins, vintage lace and veiling for a luxurious feel.

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5 festive gifts from GREENWICH MARKET

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Greenwich Market is full of festive ideas making the Christmas shop a real delight. Choose from handmade cards, hand crafted decorations and truly unique presents for all ages and to suit all pockets.
This year the Market is open every day from 24 November through to Christmas Eve so plenty of time to shop.

1

Red Snowflakes cushion by Sarah Kerry, £30. Fair Isle knitted lambswool with a plump duck feather cushion inside. *At the Market on Sat, T: 07843 805542, www.sarahkerry.co.uk*

2

Christmas stockings by Denise and Dudley, £20. Handmade felt stockings which can be personalised with initials or motifs. *At the Market on Fri, Sat and Sun, T: 020 8291 5773, www.deniseanddudley.com*

3

Wooden Tree decorations by Primrose Puzzles, £2 each or 6 for £10. Contemporary, Nordic-style Christmas decorations, handmade in England. *At the Market on Fri, Sat and Sun, T: 01303 488141, www.themarkettown.com*

4

Retro letterpress Christmas cards by Hello Lucky from Hide All, pack of six £9.99. Individual letterpress printed cards with matching envelopes. *9 Greenwich Market, SE10 9HZ, T: 020 8858 6104, www.hideall.co.uk*

5

Christmas pudding bib from Beauty & The Bib, £8. Packaged in organza gift bags with a ribbon tie, the perfect baby gift. *16 Greenwich Market SE10 9HZ, T: 020 8858 8744, www.beautyandthebib.com*

Upcoming events

Christmas Market
Open every day!
24 November – 24 December

Children's Lantern Procession
24 November, 4-7pm

Santa's Grotto
24, 27, 28 November
4,5,11,12,18,19 December

ANNIVERSARY 125 GREENWICH MARKET
www.shopgreenwich.co.uk

www.shotbythesheriff.com

Victoria Purcell
victoria.purcell@archant.co.uk

Season's greetings, dear readers! December is almost upon us, the Christmas lights are starting to flicker into life, and soon we'll be feverishly exercising those debit and credit cards…

Of course, it's much easier and less stressful to pop open your laptop and clickety-click your way through your gift list while watching *Eastenders*, but really, where's the fun in that? Where it's at is your local high street. **With Eltham, Blackheath and Chislehurst switching on their Christmas lights** on 18 November and 4 and 5 December respectively, you don't have to venture far to find that festive spirit. So lend local businesses your support – no doubt family and friends will be thrilled to see something original in their stocking (well, fingers crossed!).

Having said that, I do have a confession to make… **anyone who tracks *The Guide* on Twitter will know I paid a visit** to Bluewater the other day – oh, the shame! It's the first time I've set foot in the place, and I was filled with dread at the prospect of wrestling through the crowds and blacking out in M&S due to a lack of fresh air and natural light, but turns out it's airy, bright, and rather beautifully designed. Who knew?!

I was there to sample the goods at **the new Cadbury Cocoa House**, which opened its flagship dining destination there a few weeks ago ahead of several London openings scheduled for 2011. Of course, I couldn't resist bagging a couple of special-offer stocking fillers from Boots, but rest assured, the **Christmas shopping officially starts on 24 November when Greenwich Market** launches its festive season. We've rounded up some great gifts, available to buy from the market, and even popped a few more suggestions online for you at theguide.greatbritishlife.co.uk. *The Guide* team will be there, from 4-7pm, for the lantern procession and switching on of the lights, so come and hunt us out!

Victoria

On the cover: A festive-looking Turnpin Lane, Greenwich Market, captured by photographer Fergus Noone (www.fergusnoone.com)

Launched in 1989, The Guide magazine is distributed free to selected households in Blackheath, Brockley, Bromley, Chislehurst, Eltham, Greenwich, Isle of Dogs, Ladywell, Lee, Lewisham, St Johns and Westcombe Park. Copies are available in the Greenwich Tourist Information Office, estate agents as well as selected restaurants and shops.

For subcriptions call Sean-Paul Roberts on 020 7605 2206

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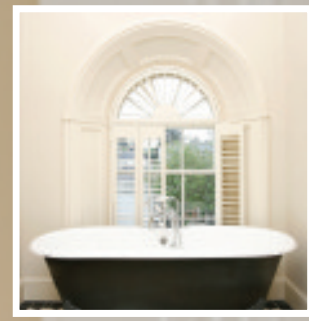

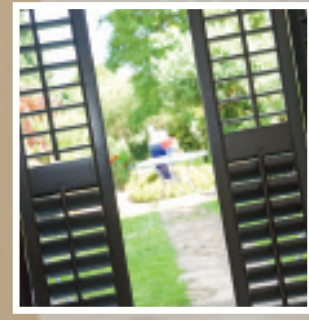

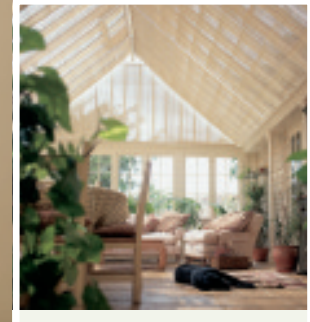

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PHOTOGRAPHY BEN WRIGHT

Fit for The King's

Shannon Denny meets **Christopher Gabbitas**, a man whose voice has carried him far and wide

Christopher Gabbitas started out his working life as a lawyer – and he was a good one, too. But now the baritone quite literally sings for his supper most nights of the year, because since 2004 he has been a member of The King's Singers.

"I grew up watching The King's Singers on TV at weekends on the variety shows," grins Christopher, still relishing the career switch. One of the world's most celebrated vocal groups, the sextet has a vast repertoire. With a discography of well over 150 recordings, they've garnered significant critical acclaim. (Their recent studio album

The King's Singers. Left: Christopher Gabbitas

Simple Gifts won a Grammy in 2009). The group's touring schedule takes them away from home six months of each year to perform sold-out concerts, and they have an extraordinary international following.

Christopher was only the 21st member to rotate into the group in its 42-year history. The job is a coveted one, and so it clearly wasn't his legal acumen that secured his spot in the prestigious line-up. "I'd always sung," he explains. "At university I had a choral scholarship so I sang every day as a formal commitment. And then at law school in Oxford I sang at Christ Church Cathedral for the year."

He continued to combine law with song when he moved to London, where he sang for the lawyers' church Temple in the Inns of Court. And, thanks to perennial shortages of vocalists, he even managed to squeeze music into his working day. The classical singing world, he says, is notably small: "Quite often if there are two performances by two different choirs on the same night there aren't quite enough people to go around!" This fact worked to his advantage. "There might be a memorial service or wedding at St Paul's Cathedral. My office was right by St Paul's, so I'd get a phone call at lunch time: 'Can you nip out of the office for a few hours…?'"

Accustomed to picking up the phone and being asked to sing, he answered a call that came "completely out of the blue" inviting him to audition for The King's Singers. Following three challenging rounds that saw hopefuls performing everything from Renaissance madrigals to Billy Joel, Christopher won his spot and left lawyering behind.

Once he had just about settled into the group, another twist of fate altered his course significantly again – but this time it was his personal life rather than his working one that was in for a jolt.

It was the last performance of his second US tour. "We ended the trip in Lexington, Kentucky," he remembers. "Ten minutes into the show this girl walks down the steps and takes her place on the front row, clearly very embarrassed to be late." The girl – also known as Stephanie – had aimed to arrive early for what she thought was a 7.30 start, but since the show actually started at 7pm she found herself unexpectedly tardy.

"She was smiling, and she was cute – and she was wearing these boots! We all got a bit distracted," Christopher admits. "And after the show her friends noticed that I might have been glancing in her direction a few times during the concert…"

The following day she appeared at the masterclass the group held before their flight back to London. What began then as a long-distance friendship resulted in a wedding a couple of years later, and now the couple are parents to a 15-month-old daughter.

When we speak, he's busy on daddy duties. "I'm really lucky because my job is all or nothing; if I'm away I'm literally away 24 hours a day but when I'm home I'm home 24 hours a day, so I can really engage in everyday life."

He's lived in Greenwich since coming to London, but now with a family he finds it's really come into its own. "It's really our home and community. Especially with a baby – it's so child-friendly, it's unbelievable the number of people we've met. We feel that we're part of a really strong, solid community. Aesthetically it's beautiful with the buildings and the park and the museum. And practically speaking it's so easy to get around."

An ideal day will involve pottering around on foot, first to the Friday or weekend markets, then to the park. "Our daughter loves the flowers at the top, so we go to the rose garden and the flower garden," he says. Then they hit their three favourite shops on Royal Hill near their flat in the conservation area – Drings butchers, the Cheeseboard and the greengrocers The Creaky Shed.

During the week, their daughter studies the family trade. "She goes to music classes on Mondays and Thursdays – Boppin' Bunnies and Monkey Music." Is she showing promise? "She has her moments. She gets very frustrated with things and throws tantrums, but music calms the savage beast as they say, and I think they probably had babies in mind when they said that."

Outside of classes she keeps busy with a tiny drum and a little xylophone. "She sits on my knee and plays piano at home. You know, she doesn't play the right notes," Christopher confides. If she has some of her father's talent though, that probably won't last for long. ●

The King's Singers present Joy To The World, a performance of Christmas music, on Sunday 19 December at 7pm at Cadogan Hall Tickets from £15 on 020 7730 4500

Christopher's Greenwich

- **An ideal day:** Pottering around Greenwich Market before heading to the park.
- **Favourite shops on Royal Hill:** Drings (No 22; 020 8858 4032), the Cheeseboard (No 26; 020 8305 0401) and The Creaky Shed (No 20; 020 8269 0333).
- **For the kids:** Boppin' Bunnies at various local venues (www.boppinbunnies.co.uk) and Monkey Music in Blackheath and Greenwich (www.monkeymusic.co.uk)

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The best events of the month ahead

PREVIEW

Abstract Orange Cityscape
By Sarah Priddis

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Open studios

20-21 Nov

Second Floor Studio & Arts (SFSA), one of the UK's largest artist communities, is currently in the throes of a three-year initiative to develop over 120,000sq ft of vacant space in industrial units in Woolwich. The project will eventually deliver over 220 self-contained studios, galleries and educational spaces. This month, the SFSA opens its doors to showcase works by more than 100 artists, from sculptors to animators and mosaic experts. Visitors can also see the artists at work. 11am-6pm. Free. Opening night 18 November, 5-9pm.

7d/e Mellish House, Harrington Way Warspite Road SE18 5NR; 020 8316 6554

Dance

16-17 Nov & 6 Dec

Trinity Laban's autumn programme reaches a close with yet more evocative shows including *Corpo-realities*, which sees classical Indian dance Bharata Natyam transformed by Sankalpam (16-17 Nov), and *A Tribute to Dr Lesley-Anne Sawyers*, a special event commemorating the life and work of the esteemed dance scholar and sceneographer. The tribute includes short films she made with Peter Sayers and a world premiere of Melanie Clarke's new solo show to music by Michael Berkeley.

Laban Theatre, Laban, Creekside SE8 3DZ; 020 8469 9500; www.laban.org

YolanDa Brown

Greenwich Jazz Festival

12-21 Nov

Enjoy a range of new and traditional jazz performances at The Greenwich Jazz Festival. The event, part of The Greenwich Festivals, brings a mix of internationally renowned and local jazz musicians to south east London. Exciting performances include double MOBO Award-winning saxophonist YolanDa Brown (19 November, Indig02) and imaginative jazz quartet Brass Jaw (20 November, National Maritime Museum). As well as the huge range of performances taking place, the festival includes educational workshops and opportunities to watch some of the UK's most gifted jazz bands rehearse.

For full listings and tickets see www.greenwich.gov.uk/festivals

Beauty and the Basque

Photography exhibition

Until 3 Jan

Blackheath-based photographer Claire Swindale presents her first solo exhibition, which will take place at Tentazioni in Shad Thames – her favourite Italian restaurant and delicatessen. Claire's photographic range includes weddings, portraits, commercial, landscape and reportage. The exhibition, which showcases her full and varied portfolio, includes images from her trips to Nepal and India, as well as her vibrant collection of image inspired by body art and tattoos. Free.

3 Mill Street, Shad Thames SE1 2BD www.claireswindale.com

Squeeze on tour

9 Dec

Legendary south London band Squeeze are back on the road, recreating the magic they first made in 1977 with their first album, *Packet Of Three*. Having numbered Jools Holland and Paul Carrack within their ranks, Squeeze became a regular fixture on the UK music scene before splitting in 1998. In March, the site of the band's first ever gig in Greenwich was commemorated with a highly prestigeous PRS for Music Heritage Award. The *Spot The Difference Tour*, calling at Indig02 this month, should prove a welcome return of the new wave guitar music that set the band apart. Tickets £35.

Millennium Way SE10 0AX. To book call 0844 844 0202 or see www.gigsandtours.com

Andy Pollard and Paul Critoph as Ugly Sisters in Cinderalla at Greenwich Theatre

Top 5 festive events

Messiah by Candlelight

For an atmospheric evening, be sure to catch Handel's *Messiah by Candlelight*, performed by the Thomas Tallis Society. A professional soprano, tenor, countertenor and bass joins the group of local amateur musicians. 12 Dec, 7pm. Tickets £10-£20.
St Alfege Church, Greenwich Church St SE10 9BJ; 020 8858 7755

Beauty and the Beast

Enjoy the age-old tale of magic, fear and romance in panto at Catford's Broadway Theatre. Actress and pop star Michelle Gayle stars as the evil Wtch Hazel alongside comedy duo Francis and Wheatley. 11 Dec-2 Jan. Tickets £12.50-£15.50.
Catford Broadway SE6; 020 8690 0002; wwww.broadwaytheatre.org.uk

Cinderella

Greenwich Theatre has been transformed into a fairy-tale world for an all-new production of *Cinderella*, written by Andrew Pollard. Book quick – the panto has already been extended due to popular demand! Tickets from £16 (kids half price). 25 Nov-9 Jan.
Crooms Hill SE10 8ES; 020 8858 7755; www.greenwichtheatre.org.uk

Christmas carols

Blackheath Choir's Christmas Concert takes place St Margaret's Church in Lee on 17 December (7.30pm, tickets £8 including refreshments, available on the door or by calling 020 8318 9643). You can also catch the choir at Canary Wharf tube station on the evening of 15 December to raise money for the Samaritans (free).
See www.blackheathchoir.org.uk

Dickensian Christmas

The Westcombe Society's Dickensian Christmas Bazaar is back with more than 50 tables of craft wares and gift ideas. The fair, which will be opened by Blackheath actress Julia Marsen, aims to raise funds for Clowns in the Sky. 11.30am-4pm.
Blackheath High School, Vanburgh Park SE3 7AT; 020 8853 0948

THE GUIDE theguide.greatbritishlife.co.uk
Find more great local events online

Promotional Feature: Recommended

The right balance

Andrew Blackburn, Family Partner at Grant Saw Solicitors, tackles the latest on prenuptial agreements

Pre-marriage agreements about how finances should be sorted out if the marriage fails, prenuptials or prenups, have very much been in the news recently. In October, the Supreme Court decided in upholding a particular agreement to lay down some principles about how such agreements should be looked at when couples separate, and one of the parties wants to rely on the agreement.

The decision has not been popular in the media. All four panellists on *Any Questions*, the week of 25 October, agreed it was a very bad development, taking the romance out of marriage, and most press commentators seemed to agree.

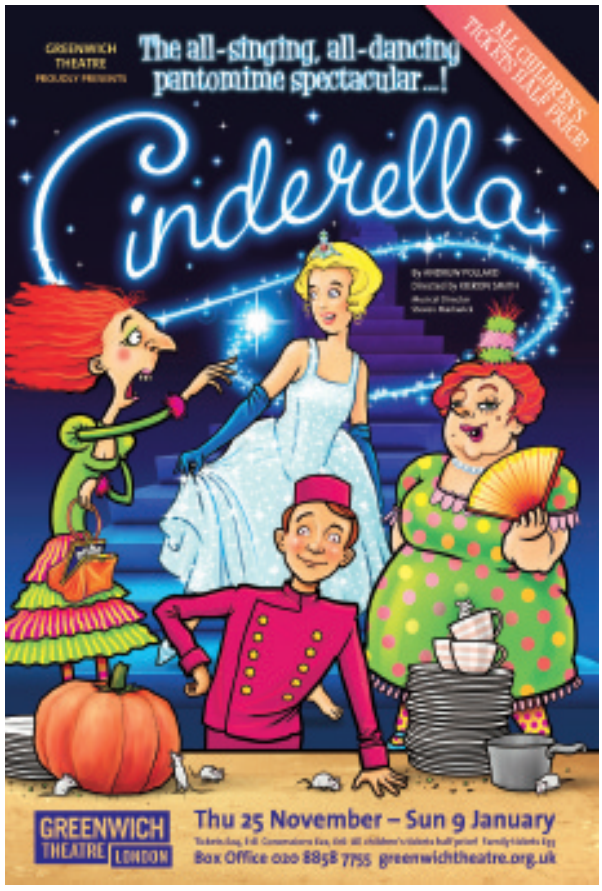
The Standard implied in its first contribution that all prenups were now binding, which they certainly are not, and said that lawyers would be charging £5,000 to £7,000 for each agreement. However, they reduced this by a factor of 10 the following day and managed to get an interesting interview with Ms Radmacher (the German millionaire whose case it was) before she returned to her jet set life.

Of much more importance was the minority judgment issued in the court by Lady Hale, the only woman among the nine judges and the only one with relatively recent family practice. Lady Hale stated that allowing prenups to be binding takes insufficient account of the normal fact that men have more power in negotiation on prenups than women, Ms Radmacher notwithstanding, and that reducing the court's power to redress that imbalance will seriously affect women for the worse. "Marriage still counts for something in the law of this country and long may it continue to do so," she said.

The new legal position of prenups is certainly some way from saying they would be followed in all circumstances. The majority decision in the Supreme Court that followed this particular agreement did broadly say that the court should uphold an agreement "freely entered into by each party with a full appreciation of its implications" unless doing so would not be "fair": so there is still a fairness test and we shall have to see how that is carried out.

The clients for whom this decision will have particular importance may be those who marry later in life, possibly for the second or third time, and have built up assets which they wish to protect, or those who have responsibilities to fulfil (to the children of previous marriages, for example). In those circumstances, prenups will now more readily be accepted as governing the division of assets that happen on separation.

Grant Saw Solicitors LLP, Norman House, 110-114 Norman Road SE10 9EH; 020 8858 6971; www.grantsaw.com



The Westcombe Society's
Dickensian Christmas Bazaar

In aid of Clowns in the Sky
Saturday 20th November 11.30 - 4.00
Blackheath High School, Mycenae Road
To be opened by Julia Marsen of 'Ottie and the Bea'
(Actor in 'Corrie' and 'the 6 wives of Henry VIII')

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Pub landlord Geoff Keen presented Gwen Jones, Pearly Queen of Greenwich, with a cheque for £530 in late October. Gwen nominated Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice to receive the money, raised from a jumble sale held at the Pelton Arms. Further fundraising efforts took place at the pub in November with a Cockney Night of pie and mash. The Pelton Arms was the location for *Rock and Chips*, a prequel to the classic BBC sitcom, about the early days of Rodney Trotter.

23-25 Pelton Road SE10 9PQ; 020 8858 0572
www.peltonarmspub.com

NEWS*flash*

The local news and views this month

2012, here we come!

Sporting superstars have given Greenwich's Olympic legacy plans the thumbs-up. Outdoor gyms, sports grounds and play areas are being created as part of Greenwich Council's £4.8 million Playground to Podium project, which aims to get residents involved in sport and fitness. Local schoolgirl Zoe Smith, 16 (right), who this year won a bronze medal for weightlifting in the Commonwealth Games, and is sponsored by Greenwich Starting Blocks, tried out new outdoor gym equipment at Abbey Wood Park. Three-times Paralympian gold-medallist swimmer Giles Long tried out new outdoor equipment at the Well Hall Pleasance play area, before calling in at Club @ Well Hall, Blackheath Rugby Club's new training facility with artificial all weather pitch and floodlit training area, part funded by Greenwich Council.

TV times

Sundridge Park Manor, Bromley's Grade I listed 17th century Manor House, provides the spectacular backdrop to Channel 4's glitzy new series *Wedding House*. The programme, which airs on Tuesdays at 8pm until 23 November, sees couples live out their wildest wedding fantasy, having handed over all responsibility to the Wedding House team. The manor and Bromley's Registration & Citizenship Service worked closely with Betty TV's production team to achieve a whirlwind schedule of 32 elaborately themed marriages, civil partnerships, vow renewals and commitment ceremonies. If you've missed the series so far, you can catch up online at www.channel4.com. Also, on 14 November, Sundridge Park Manor hosts a Wedding Show where brides-to-be will be able to experience the stunning location and charming gardens dressed for a wedding.

Willoughby Lane, off Plaistow Lane, BR1 3FZ; 020 8313 3232
www.sundridgeparkmanor.com

Go digital

Following the opening of Ravensbourne's new educational premises at Greenwich Peninsula, it's all systems go for Greenwich Digital Skills. The joint initiative by Greenwich Council and Ravensbourne provides vocational training, enterprise courses and community learning in design and digital media. Cllr Denise Hyland, cabinet member for regeneration, enterprise and skills, said: "Digital skills are increasingly important to the economy, and we will offer Greenwich residents opportunities to increase their employment prospects in this key sector."

For more information on courses call 0800 0130 730 or see www.webenrol.com/greenwich

MORLEY VON STERNBERG / CHRISTINE DONNIER-VALENTIN

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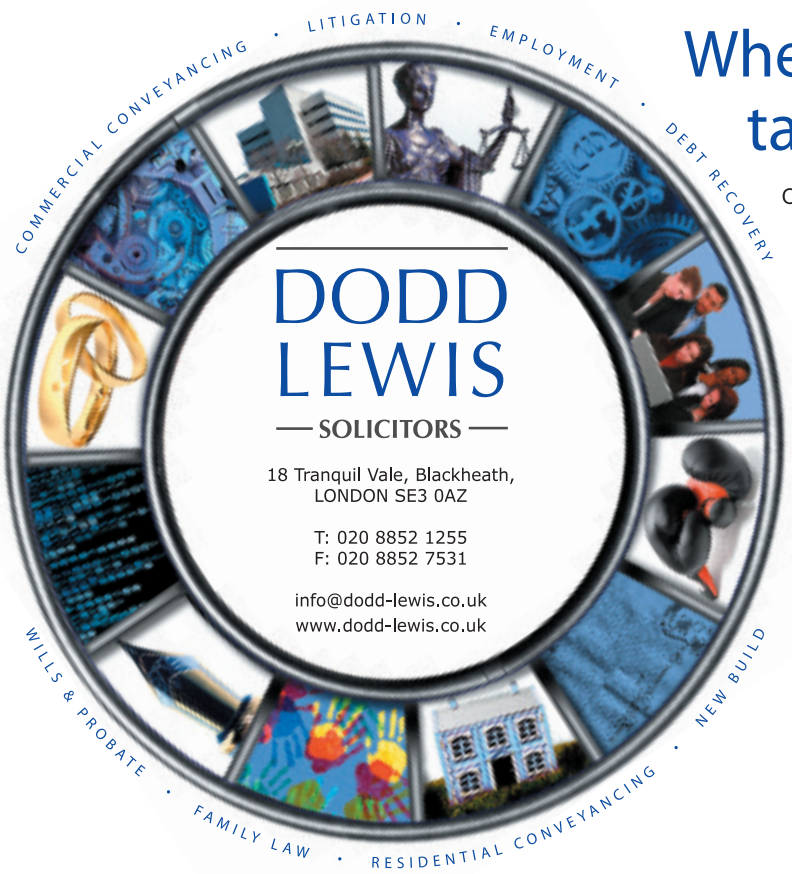

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It's Christmas time!

As the big day creeps ever closer, *The Guide* puts together its Greenwich Market Christmas list…

Oh yes, it's that time of year! Prepare to flex those credit cards, blow your budget, overindulge in mince pies and brandy and spread more than a little merriment. It all starts officially, well in SE10 anyway, on 24 November from 4-7pm with the launch of Greenwich Market's Christmas season. There will be a children's lantern procession finishing at the market (where kids can visit Santa in his grotto), the cast of Greenwich Theatre's *Cinderella* will help the Mayor switch on the festive lights, and everyone can sing Christmas Carols and enjoy a warm beverage to keep off the chill. And, of course, there's shopping! The market will be filled with 150 Christmas-themed stalls offering unique, hand-crafted gift ideas as well as jewellery, fashion and beauty treats. *The Guide* team will be there with bells on, shopping up a storm, and here are a few of our favourite gift ideas, available to buy in and around Greenwich Market this Christmas. ●

See www.shopgreenwich.co.uk

Hide All Radley wallet **£40**

Sophie & Matt purple spot baby changing bag **£85**

Johnny Rocket Jacey Withers sterling silver necklace with black rhodium and 18 carat details. Prices from **£150**

For Her

Belle Fashion elephant hot water bottle **£40**

LauraLaura odd green stud earrings, made from vintage buttons, **£8**

PepperPink key pendant **£195** online at www.pepperpink.com

Emma Nissim grey Apples and Pears silk twill tie **£50**

Will Hammond handmade card wallets **£10**

Fergus Noone 2011 A3 Calendar **£14.99**

For Him

Nauticalia Ingersoll Bull Run watch, water-resistant to 150ft, **£165**

Arty Globe cufflinks **£40 a pair**

Joy Store fur-lined waxed trapper hat **£20**

QQ Castle Lazy Choy sock dolls **£12**

Alphabet Jigsaws alphabet bus **£30**

Beadoir purple glam-up bracelet **£6**

For kids

REDDolphins organic cotton t-shirt **£12**

Green Baby Little Deer Shoe **£18**

Beauty and the Bib pudding bibs **£8 each**

ALL PRODUCTS, EXCEPT THE PEPPER PINK PENDANT, ARE AVAILABLE FROM STALL HOLDERS AND BOUTIQUES IN GREENWICH MARKET AND THE SURROUNDING STREETS

Christmas wishes

For the most luxurious and original gift ideas, shop local!

Bert & Betty

Visit fabulous kitchenware and hardware store Bert & Betty to find perfect presents such as Nicholas Mosse jugs, Le Creuset casseroles, children's baking sets and vintage pinnies; or to treat yourself to a KitchenAid Artisan mixer, Joseph Joseph scales or silicone bakeware. You can also pick up Christmas essentials - roasting tins, cake decorations, saucepans, mixing bowls and everything for DIY. Open seven days a week in December from 10am-5.30pm.

25 Greenwich South Street SE10 8NT; 020 8853 8708
www.bertandbettygreenwich.co.uk

Lee Green Open Studios

The Lee Green Open Studios sees 50 local artists open their studios and homes to exhibit paintings, prints, sculpture, ceramics, jewellery, photography, textiles and more. You'll find unique, locally created Christmas presents, a children's art session, knitting classes and even a pop-up cafe! 13-14 and 20-21 November. Free admission.

Find leaflets at Rhubarb & Custard Cafe, 164 Manor Lane or see www.leegreenopenstudios.com

Arty Globe

Discover a new urban perspective… For all lovers of the metropolis, Arty Globe is sure to fire the imagination and tempt you when choosing THE special gift. Featuring award-winning artist Hartwig Braun's vibrant and graphic urban cityscape designs, the range can be seen on everything from prints and canvas to stationery, gifts, home and fashion accessories. Deckchair shown right: Maritime Greenwich design.

Arty Globe by Hartwig Braun; 15 Greenwich Market SE10 9HZ
020 7998 3144 / 07939 120 868; www.artyglobe.com

The Image Studio

Established in 1994, the Image Studio's unique style has made it the most popular studio in the area. The sessions are fun and relaxed, creating great natural images for the whole family, including the dog! Limited space is left for Christmas, so book now! Or, for a great present, why not purchase a gift voucher? Call the studio for details.

72a High Street, Chislehurst BR7 6HA; 020 8467 8151
www.theimagestudio-uk.com; imagestudio@btconnect.com

The Beaverwood Club

The Beaverwood Club is the best live music venue in the South East, with well stocked bars, intimate surroundings and a great atmosphere. Coming up are: The Strawbs, Joanne Shaw Taylor, John O'Leary, The Small Fakers, The New Amen Corner and Absolute Bowie - not to mention The Rollin' Stoned. Over 30's every Friday night.
For full listings, check out the website.

Beaverwood Road, Chislehurst BR7 6HF; 020 8300 1385
www.thebeaverwoodclub.co.uk
info@thebeaverwoodclub.co.uk

Sophisticated Fitness for Women

Whether you are shaping up for your wedding, regaining your figure after childbirth, training for a marathon or just need some extra help, Penelope Fitstar, south east London's premier women's fitness company, can help. The Fitstar team offers personal training, post-natal yummy mummy packages, bridal fitness, outdoor bootcamps, running courses and Bootox weekends. Christmas gift vouchers available.

Call 07787 432 230, see www.penelopefitstar.com or email info@penelopefitstar.com

The Nail And Tanning Day Spa

Fantastic offers for the Christmas Season are now running. Minx toes and shalac fingers, normally £45, now only £30 and St Tropez Spray £20. Full set of eye lash extensions £50, Express eye lashs £15. Gift vouchers special - £50 for £40 and £100 voucher for £75 (redeemable within 3 months), and 50% off lazer courses. Microdermabrasion course of three, £99. Call or stop by for more details.

Day Spa Blackheath, 147 Lee Road SE3 9DJ, 020 8297 2799
www.dayspablackheath.co.uk

The Fan Museum

Enjoy a flight of fancy at The Fan Museum. The boutique offers everything fan-shaped, from stocking fillers to jewellery, with many designs exclusive to the museum. Peruse an extraordinary collection of publications exploring the history and beauty of the fan, then after your shopping experience, relax and enjoy a traditional afternoon tea served in the beautiful settings of the Orangery (Sun & Tues).

Open 11am-5pm Tuesday to Saturday and12pm-5pm Sunday (closed Mondays).

12 Croom's Hill SE10 8ER; 020 8305 1441; www.fan-museum.org
Call to reserve a table at the Orangery call 020 8305 1441

Loose Ends

Fancy learning to knit, crochet or sew? Or trying something different like felting or calligraphy? New to south east London is Loose Ends, which holds local craft sessions for busy people. In just one evening you can make beautiful presents - you'll be amazed at what you can do. Visit the website for more information and to sign up for courses.

Call 020 8858 8889 or see www.looseends.co

So Organic

So Organic's gorgeous toxin-free candles will make great gifts for men and women of all ages, and keep your home beautifully fragrant this festive season. Choose from a variety of fragrances to reflect your mood, from Sensual to Inspiration and the best selling Relaxing. Candles cost £12 for the large size and £4 for the smaller. Available in store or online.

22 Nelson Road
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0800 169 2579
www.SoOrganic.com

DAO

Unique and individual, Dao presents exquisitely designed Tibetan jewellery. The range includes bangles and beautifully ornate silver wrist cuffs with intricate individual designs, inlaid with semi-precious gemstones, all handcrafted by skilled artisans in Northern Tibet. Tibetan Dzi hand-carved wrist mala beads, in wood, onyx, jade and fossil beeswax, and each with a special symbol and blessing, make a unique and special gift.

2 Greenwich Market SE10 9HZ; 07780 852 239
info@daolondon.co.uk; www.daolondon.co.uk

Cook & Matthews

The team at Cook and Matthews Sport strives to offer quality products at competitive prices. Located in the heart of Chislehurst High Street, the small and friendly independent Sports Shop specialises in cricket, hockey, rugby, tennis and swimming. Leading brands including Polar, TK Hockey, Canterbury, Gilbert, Grays Hockey, Piri Piri, Gunn and Moore, Trion:z, Bradbury, Tyr Swimming, Asics and many more.

68a High Street, Chislehurst BR7 6JS; 020 8467 6633
cookandmatthewssport@gmail.com; cookandmatthewssport.co.uk

Stitches & Daughters

This Christmas, Stitches & Daughters is a veritable treasure trove of imaginative gifts. Discover an eclectic collection of decorations by Gisela Graham and gorgeous kitchen goodies by Emma Bridgewater Pottery to ensure stylish festive celebrations. Whether you're looking for crackers, cards, stocking fillers or wreaths, then one-stop Christmas shop. Open Sundays in December.

3 Greenwich South Street; 020 8305 1396
www.stitchesanddaughters.com

Neroli

Give the gift of time this Christmas with a Neroli gift voucher. For a luxurious treat, choose the Pure Indulgence Package for top to toe pampering, or a Holistic Massage that is individually customised to ease tension and relax overworked muscles. With an extensive list of treatments for both men and women, the Neroli team can help you put together the perfect gift for someone special.

Open seven days with late nights till 9pm Tues-Thurs.
43 Honor Oak Park SE23 1DZ
020 8699 9496
www.neroli-skincare.co.uk

Colfe's Leisure Centre

Treat someone to a three-month voucher for Colfe's Leisure Centre. With a gym and swimming pool, it's a great place to get fit and have fun in the New Year with classes such as Zumba, Spin Bike and Kettle Bell. There are children's classes too, including fencing, trampolining, football and swimming. Also, if you join after buying a voucher, there is no registration fee!

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Horn Park Lane SE12 8AW
www.colfes.com/leisurecentre

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* Ask in store for details. Due to printing limitations, colour may vary from that shown. Offer valid from 11.11.10 until 23.11.10.

Winter chic

Stay ahead of the fashion pack this winter in individual designs at Greenwich's Belle Fashion

Sloppy old jumper be gone! Winter is no excuse to loaf around in your tired old favourites – it's the perfect time to strut out in style, according to Belle Fashion in Greenwich. "This season we have a gorgeous selection of coats, including a limited-edition luxurious cashmere mix coat designed exclusively for Belle," says owner Karin Tearle. "Isabel de Pedro is proving to be a firm favourite with flattering and feminine styles, Françoise Pendville is as imaginative as ever and Sita Murt adds sassiness to our collections." Stockists of unique, high-end labels such as Velvet, Paige, European Culture and Karen Cole, as well as Pavoni bags and Santacana accessories, you'll be the belle of the ball, whether you're enjoying festive celebrations or just on the school run. ●

20 College Approach SE10 9HY
020 8465 5777; www.bellefashion.co.uk

Dress by Isabel De Pedro £225, also available in blue. Left: Alice Hannah military gloves, £20, and hat, £20

Cashmere and wool coat with silk lining and detachable faux-fur collar, by local designer Ella Sharpe, £500. Right: Alice Hannah black and white gloves, £20, and hat, £20

THE VISIONARY'S WATCH

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ROLEX.COM

Angellica Bell, Zoe Salmon and Ro Robertson

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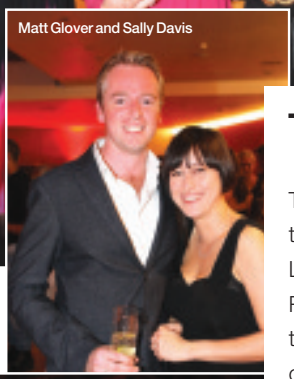
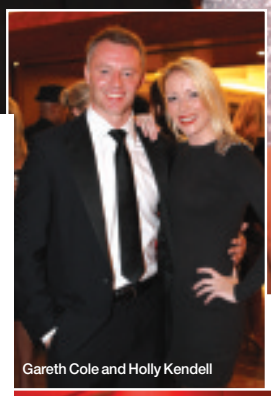

Matt Glover and Sally Davis


Gareth Cole and Holly Kendell

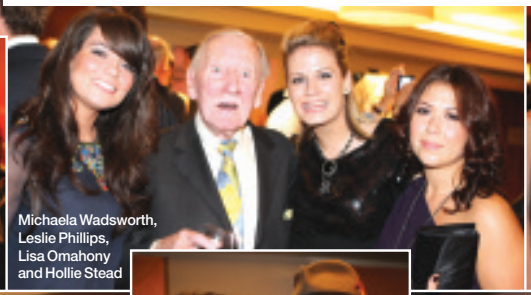
THAT'S LIFE

The cream of the London crop were out in force on 7 October to witness the inaugural London Lifestyle Awards. Archant Life London joined View London as sponsors of the event at the Riverbank Park Plaza Hotel, and we were duly entertained by the event's founder Jason Gale and host Greg Burns as we sipped on glasses of Tanqueray Gin's exotic cocktails, not to mention the many presenters who dished out the awards (a special nod to Leslie Phillips for a speech that looked like it was going nowhere before packing an emotional punch). As the after party approached, everyone raised a glass of Ron Zacapa Centenario rum to Archant Life's very own Johnny Hustler, who presented the top award to 95.8 Capital FM's Help a London Child for Outstanding Contribution to London Lifestyle alongside Caprice (a very fetching partnership) to cap off a wonderful evening. See you there next year.

Nick Knowles and Jessica Moore

Imogen Thomas, Antony Petrou and Anjelika Kapanidi

Caprice and Megan Matthews


Michaela Wadsworth, Leslie Phillips, Lisa Omahony and Hollie Stead

Sarah Murray and Blane Perrotton

Nick Balentine, Rusty Egan and Ariela David

Emma Engkvist, Imogen Excell and Sophie Ronald

Gavin Bowers and Colin Reed

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www.visitgreenwich.org.uk/christmas

Cutty Sark Zone 2 Greenwich Zone 2

For Christmas events information, a range of offers and your chance to win a family ticket to Cinderella, explore our advent calendar at www.visitgreenwich.org.uk/christmas

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Turkey? Check.
Presents under the tree? Check.
Carrots for Rudolph? Check.
Hair? Arrrgggggghhh!

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Neroli Loves…

…luxurious gifts

A gorgeous gift can make the bleakest winter's day a little more bearable. We have compiled a wish list of our favourite treats, perfect for Christmas, all available at Neroli

• Bathing Beauties will love Abahna's Aromatherapy Bath Oils. Delicately fragranced to soothe and calm with essential oils, 80% organic in a skin-softening base of almond and sunflower oils with Vitamin E, and beautifully packaged, they make an ideal gift. Our favourite is the fresh floral scent of Frangipani & Orange Blossom (100ml £24).

• Keep warm this winter and add a little vintage chic to your wardrobe with a Samantha Holmes crochet knit hat (£34) and scarf (£39.50) in soft baby alpaca.

• Natural and organic skincare is a luxury we covet. Eminence's starter kits provide the perfect introduction to organic treatment skincare with sets to suit all skin types (prices from £32-£49).

• For post-party recovery, a Holistic Silk Eye Mask is an absolute must, generously sized to ensure all traces of daylight are effectively blocked and filled with lavender to soothe fragile senses (£36).

• For someone very special, treat them to the luxury of time with Neroli's Pure Indulgence Package. The two-hour, top-to-toe treatment commences with a full-body cleanse and exfoliation and an anti-stress facial, followed by an holistic massage to release tension (£105).

Neroli, 43 Honor Oak Park SE23 1DZ
020 8699 9496; www.neroli-skincare.co.uk

Inner calm

'Tis the season to be jolly, but dashing around buying presents can be a stressful business. So pause and book yourself a place at the Satyananada yoga workshop on 28 November. The non-profit, day-long event, run by yoga expert of 12 years Swami Krishnapremananda, covers the importance of meditation and how to achieve it, as well as posture work and a question-and-answer session. 10am-5pm with refreshments at 9.30am. £30.

42 The Priory, Priory Park SE3 9UZ. To book call Carol on 07964 782 059 or 07974 904 397

Top to toe

Charlotte Livingstone on keeping your cool over Christmas

Sultry set

Give the gift of pure indulgence with the Tom Ford Black Orchid Limited Edition Collection. Inspired by the luxurious fragrance, the set includes Black Orchid pressed perfume in a slim black fluted compact, lip colour with chamomilla flower oil, and lusciously dark nail colour. So fabulously gorgeous, you might find it hard to give away... £90

From SpaceNK, Cabots Place West E14 4QT; 020 7719 1902

Limbering up

Don't become too attached to your sofa this winter – keep moving with Complementary Health Centre's series of weekend workshops. Held in their lovely exercise studio in Lee, the classes range from the ever-popular Pilates, yoga and tai chi to meditation for beginners, hypnobirthing, exercise for the over 50s, homeopathy first aid and even posture for couch potatoes (what did I say about that sofa?). The centre also welcomes suggestions for new workshops.

172-174 Manor Lane SE12 8LP; 020 8297 8887
www.chc-lee.co.uk

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Gourmet news

Eat out, eat in… wherever you drink and dine, have a foodie Christmas, says **Charlotte Livingstone**

Whisked away

Gather up your foodie friends and celebrate Christmas at Plateau. The cool, contemporary, glass-fronted restaurant, overlooking the bright lights of Canary Wharf, has teamed up with Johnny Walker to create a bespoke tasting experience with a welcome cocktail, three-course menu expertly matched with whiskies, and Blue Label to finish. A whisky pro will be on hand to guide the tasting. Available for groups of 10 at £95 per head.

Canada Place, 38 Canada Square E14 5ER; 020 7715 7100
www.plateaurestaurant.co.uk

Hamper heaven

Truffle season is well underway, but you don't need to head to Italy – nor to an expensive restaurant up town – to indulge. Luigi's has created the lavish Truffle Lover Hamper, packed with delights such as truffle salami, a white truffle sauce for pasta, truffle honey and white truffle dressing. It makes a great Christmas present for those who love a bit of foodie extravagance… and it's not as expensive as you'd think at just £69.95.

Buy online at
www.luigismailorder.com

Sky's the limit

Rocket bar and restaurant has a lot to be proud of. Popular for its delicious 13" stone-baked pizzas, it has been shortlisted for Pizza Restaurant of the Year 2010 by the Pizza, Pasta and Italian Food Association. The place is good with drinks, too – Suzana Amorim, from Rocket Canary Wharf's talented bar team, recently won the Beefeater 24 People's Champion 2010 Award for her 24/7 cocktail combining Beefeater 24 gin with lime, grapes, basil and a hint of chilli.

2 Churchill Place E14 5RB; 020 3200 2022
www.rocketrestaurants.co.uk

All things nice

Whether it's a cocktail or a softie you're after this Christmas, add a touch of sparkle with Belvoir Fruit Farms' cordials or pressés. The range spans 14 cordials and 12 pressés, ensuring you're covered for all manner of fussy drinkers! But if you're not sure where to start, the Belvoir team has come up with a few festive recipes to set you off on the right foot. See theguide.greatbritishlife.co.uk to discover how to whip up a Santa's Little Helper or a Winter Spice. Prices from £2.70.

Available from all major supermarkets

Guy Awford

Christmas dinner for the masses can be daunting, but there are simple little tricks you can employ to make the day simply delicious

To many of us Christmas Day is all fun and games; a time to eat, drink and watch telly. But for those charged with feeding the masses it can be a very different story. If that responsibility falls on you then how do you ensure that the turkey is moist, the roast potatoes are crispy outside and fluffy inside, and that everything is ready on time? In short, how do you make great food, without the pressures of cooking completely overshadowing your day?

Well, short of hiring a chef (don't ask), the key to a successful Christmas lunch is all about good organisation. Keep your menu simple and make sure you have the starter and dessert prepared in advance. Before you roast the turkey remove the wishbone, it's much easier to carve. Ask your butcher to remove the legs and bone and roll – they can then be cooked separately, which will reduce the cooking time, ensuring the breast meat doesn't dry out. Weigh the breast crown and roast for 20 minutes per 500g, putting the legs in at the same time. While resting the turkey for 20 minutes covered with foil, pop the chipolatas in the oven, cook the sprouts, and make your gravy in the roasting tray.

For perfect roast potatoes use King Edward or Desiree. Boil until just cooked, drain in a colander, and gently shake to rough up the surfaces. Place them, curved side down, into hot vegetable oil and roast for about an hour, turning every 15 minutes.

I love Christmas pudding but if you are tempted to make an alternative dessert then a panetonne bread and butter pudding is perfect. Easy to prepare and delicious, it has all the hallmarks of a modern Christmas classic. ●

Panetonne bread and butter pudding with mascarpone custard – serves 6

- Pre-heat the oven to 150°C
- Bring 200ml milk and 300ml double cream to the boil
- Whisk 3 eggs with 100g of caster sugar, the juice and zest from 1 orange, and the seeds from 1 vanilla pod. Add the hot milk and whisk together
- Slice the panetonne (500g) into 8 thick slices and butter generously
- Butter a ceramic dish and lay down 1 layer of buttered panetonne
- Cover with the liquid and repeat until you have 3 layers.
- Sprinkle the top with soft brown sugar and gently press
- Place the dish in a deep oven tray, pouring in enough boiling water to come halfway up the sides of the dish
- Bake for 30 minutes until a golden brown crust forms

Mascarpone custard

- Bring 500ml milk to the boil
- Whisk 6 egg yolks with 75g of caster sugar, 40g of corn flour, 50ml of cold milk and the seeds from a vanilla pod
- Pour in hot milk and whisk
- Cook over a low heat stirring constantly until it thickens.
- Remove from heat and whisk a ladleful into 100g of mascarpone. Once smooth whisk that back into the custard
- Pass through a fine sieve into a serving jug

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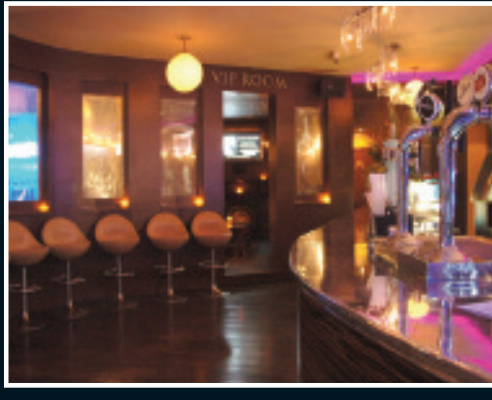

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Epicure

Victoria Purcell goes Belgian in Bromley and chocolate crazy at the new Cadbury Cocoa House

Belgo
242 The Glades Shopping Centre
020 8466 8522
www.belgo-restaurants.co.uk

Moules, frites, bieres – what more could a girl want? Popular Belgian chain Belgo opened its doors in Bromley earlier this year, replacing the cosy, quaint Abbaye with more contemporary surrounds. Doubtless many preferred the original aesthetics, but the refurb is pleasant on the eye, with pastel-green walls, colourful pop-art and huge canvases paying homage to Duvel and Vedett.

Belgo has over 50 Belgian beers, so while my colleague Nicoletta ordered a spritzer without batting an eyelid, I was a bit stuck. I went with the waiter's recommendation of Slag (I believe it's short for something Belgian and unpronounceable, but yes, I giggled). It proved a good tonic to the day, easy and light with aromatic hop flowers.

The indecision then switched sides of the table – it was always going to be mussels for me, but my colleague was eyeing up the rib-eye steak, before remembering where she was, plumping for a kilo pot of the aforementioned clams, and then agonizing over the flavour. Eventually, she chose the Poivre, which turned out to be an excellent choice – steamed with shallots, white wine, parsley and spicy green peppercorns that left a lingering heat on the back of the tongue.

In a radical departure from the norm, I went for the Florentine – open-faced mussels served on a platter with creamed spinach sauce, smoked bacon and grilled with gruyere cheese. I thoroughly enjoyed it, but I couldn't help but feel envious of Nicoletta's order. Fortunately, she rapidly reached capacity, so we swapped dishes – you just can't beat a steaming, soupy pot of the little suckers.

We'd preceded the main event with delicious starters of parma ham, served with a light, fresh celeriac remoulade, and sautéed squid and chorizo with roquette and baby gem, and thus dessert was beyond us. Even when we caught sight of a huge Belgian waffle materialising at the table next to us…

Cadbury Cocoa House
Lower Mall, Bluewater Shopping Centre, Greenhithe DA9 9ST
www.cadburycocoahouse.com

It's just like Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory, bar Wonka, the Oompa-Loompas and chocolate river... You won't go short of the sweet, gloopy, dark stuff though, even the furnishings look good enough to eat, with smooth, brown booth seats edged with milky white piping and light fittings that resemble cocoa pods.

Afternoon tea is always hard to resist, and I figured Cadbury would know how to trot out the best of British with style. Their three-tier version, served on plates embossed with a crown (Rule Britannia!), comes with delicate finger sandwiches of cucumber and cream cheese, smoked salmon, and egg mayonnaise, a couple of sweet pastries, and mini scones with gloriously rich Devon cream. You can Ritz it up with a glass of champers, but in anticipation of the amount of sugar I was about to ingest, I went with a soothing green tea. Disappointingly, there was no chocolate anywhere to be seen – maybe a couple of Cadbury's Roses or cheeky choccie fudge cake? Perhaps, with the abundance of ice creams, hot drinks and sweet treats sporting a nod to the cocoa bean, Cadbury didn't feel it necessary. And thus, sugared out but feeling deprived, I followed up with an utterly divine rum and raisin hot chocolate.

My friend sensibly opted for a delicious, if a little small, vegetable salad in a light mimosa dressing, and thus she had no trouble polishing off the (rather pricey at £13.95) Absolutely Knickerbockerglorious – layers of ice cream, berries, meringue and chocolate chunks, topped with whipped cream and bottomed out with crème brûlée.

Cadbury has been clever with its menu, you see, offering up a selection of British Classics such as grilled chicken salad and scampi and chips for those of a savoury persuasion. On my next visit, it'll be a fillet steak sandwich followed by the Old Jamaican Banana Split.

Now why didn't I think of that before?

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- Butternut squash risotto with crispy sage

Desserts
- Christmas pudding with brandy sauce or custard
- Champagne cheesecake
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Family *matters*

Suzanne Amos rounds up festive fun and frolics for all the good little boys and girls

DIY decorations

If you want to stamp your style on Christmas this year, why not make your own decorations or gifts? At Greenwich's Biscuit Ceramic Cafe, children can decorate a mug, jug, plate or bowl with Santa, snowmen, holly and mistletoe. Kids love creating their own designs, and they'll look great on the table on Christmas Day. From £10.

3-4 Nelson Road SE10 9JB
020 8853 8588
www.biscuit-biscuit.com

Little nipper

Boost your family's fitness this winter with a dose of Capoeira. Local teacher Graduado Manjerico runs afterschool classes in this dynamic Afro-Brazilian martial art, for children aged 4-6 and 7-12 years old. The moves are set to Brazilian music, which helps children develop rhythm and coordination. Classes are on Wednesdays and cost £7.50 per child.

Abada UK, Quaker Meeting House
Lawn Terrace SE3 9LL; 07947 608 344
www.abada-uk.com

Stick 'em up!

Set your children to work creating their own Christmas cards and gift tags with *1000 Christmas Stickers* (right, £9.99), a seasonal sticker set from Usborne – how cute are these cheery penguins, elves and reindeer? Or if your kids prefer to make stuff from scratch, the *Big Book of Christmas Things to Make and Do* (£12.99) will show you how to make advent calendars, decorations and wrapping paper.

Available from Waterstone's, 51 Greenwich Church St SE10 9BL; 0843 290 8353

Sleep London

Kit out the kids in the cutest pajamas from children's bedding and sleepwear designers Quick Brown Fox of Dulwich. The three-quarter length bottoms and extra-soft organic-fabric top feature cute silhouettes of a little girl and her dog playing against a backdrop of some of the capital's best-known landmarks, including the O2 and Canary Wharf. The London Toile range also includes bedding and, certified to the Global Organic Textile Standard, you won't find a range with better eco credentials. £20

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Isle of Christmas

Get your skates on and enjoy the festivities at Canary Wharf

Cold, slippery ice is usually the bane of all winters, but when whizzing around a rink surrounded by glittering skyscrapers and twinkling lights, then it suddenly becomes magical.

Once again, ice rinks are springing up around the capital, and here at *The Guide* we'll be heading over to E14 to soak up the spirit of Christmas when the Canary Wharf Ice Rink returns to Canada Square Park for its sixth year.

Last year's larger-size rink remains, brand new sharpened skates have been introduced and the park will be decked out like a winter wonderland. There's a viewing gallery for those who prefer to keep their feet planted on terra firma, and the rinkside bar provides a cosy environ for all to reconvene over drinks once the chill sets in. It's the ideal destination for a date, for friends and family or even the whole office.

Private lessons are available with a qualified instructor all day Saturday and Sunday and from 12noon-1pm on weekdays, so whatever your level of experience you can take to the ice confidently.

Festive delight

In fact, the whole of Canary Wharf will once again light up for Christmas. One of the highlights is a huge shopping extravaganza on Thursday 2 December with entertainment, exclusive promotions and giveaways. For the most problematic of presents, the Canary Wharf Gift Card launches in November, redeemable in all shops and restaurants.

There are hundreds of stores offering up gift ideas to spoil your loved ones, with a wealth of luxury brands including Myla, Hugo Boss, Hackett, Aquascutum and Tiffany & Co.

For little ones, Santa and his reindeers fly into town on 4 December in a flurry of festivity at the East Wintergarden, where the man in red and friends will put on a spectacular performance. Santa's Grotto will set up home in Jubilee Place, opening to delight the kids with great gifts every weekend throughout December and the five days leading up to Christmas.

"Winter is a special season at Canary Wharf," says Camille Waxer, Vice President of Retail at Canary Wharf Group plc. "The festive lights come on, the ice rink opens, the bars, restaurants and shops fill up and there is a real buzz in the air. Adding to the excitement this year are a number of brand new stores, bars and restaurants including Tiffany & Co, the world's premier diamond jeweller."

A very Merry Christmas indeed! ●

Canary Wharf Ice Rink is open seven days a week, Mon-Sat 9.45am-11pm, Sun 9.45am-7.30pm, from now until 20 February. Tickets £10-£12, concs £9, kids £7.50, family £32. Book online at www.ticketmaster.co.uk or call 0844 847 1556. For further information see www.canarywharficerink.com and www.mycanarywharf.com

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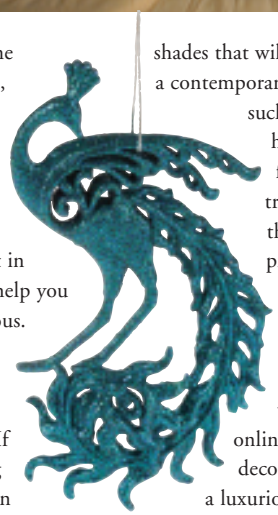
Style counsel

Interiors guru **Sonia Murton**, talks Christmas entertaining in style

How I love getting my home spruced up for Christmas, and anyone else's for that matter. I am the original Kent Christmas fairy as I quite literally fly around ensuring homes are the epitome of festive chic, rather than resembling Santa's grotto. With that in mind, I have lots of suggestions to help you get your home sparkling and gorgeous.

First things first, real or artificial Christmas tree? It's a personal preference, but I love the aroma of pine and always opt for a real tree. If you go artificial, it's worth investing – John Lewis has a good selection, in particular the 6ft Morning Dew Christmas Tree (£125). For a real tree that has been grown sustainably in the Kent countryside, look no further than Deliver Me a Christmas Tree. I suggest a Nordman Fir, the most popular type (£34.95 plus £11.99 delivery).

If your decorations have been doing the rounds, treat your tree to a stylish new look, but don't make impromptu buys – have a simple colour scheme in mind with one or two shades that will compliment your room. For a contemporary style, try some kitsch pieces such as Cocoa Bean's adorable hanging deco robins (right, from £6.50). If you want your tree bang-on interiors trend, then The Range has some super pieces in the season's hottest colours, including peacock blue and purple (left and top right, from £1.19). For an elegant, vintage-inspired theme, Vintage Amethyst online has some really lovely decorations, or go all out with a luxurious gold theme and star centrepiece (pictured above, from Belle).



When it comes to your dining table, team plain crockery with a few festive finds like Emma Bridgwater's Christmas Star Baker Tray – perfect for roasties (bottom left, £32.95).

It's nice to keep the decor theme consistent throughout your home, so pick up a few extra pieces, like baubles to scatter on the table, when buying your tree decorations.

So, until next year, all that's left for me to say is have a jolly Christmas and splendid New Year!

Sonia Murton is founder of Belle Interiors
17 Royal Parade BR7 6NR; 020 8467 0290
www.belleinteriors.co.uk

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In the frame

Buying a camera for Christmas? Greenwich photographer **Fergus Noone** on his chosen few for 2011…

To follow up on Part 3 of my online blog with *The Guide* magazine, I have come up with a collection that should allow the process of buying the right camera for the person you have in mind much easier this Christmas.

For the compact that does a pro job, try the Ricoh CX4. They come in at around £260 and you can buy local at Percival Cameras in Eltham. It's the new model, its creative, takes sharper pictures in difficult light and has many photographers very excited.

If your gift is for the photo enthusiast and you wish to upgrade to a D-SLR, I recommend the 12.3 megapixel Nikon D5000 (around £485) – it has incredibly low noise, ranging from 200 ISO-3200. It's lightweight and the perfect introduction kit for pro-photography. Talk with the folks at Calumet, Drummond Street – you'll be able to hold the camera and discuss all the accessories you'll need to get started.

For the complete all-rounder, go for the Canon EOS 5D Mark II. It's expensive (RRP £2,300 without lenses), but it's a photographic feast. With a range of focal lengths, visual effects, 21.1 megapixel and HD video recording, it is an investment for any professional. And last but not least, the bridge camera. Try the Fuji FinePix S1600 – this camera is likely to prove popular for the price (around £170) and a truly worthwhile alternative to a standard compact.

I know for many people that a new camera is exciting, but equally daunting to fully understand. I have been running photography tuition workshops with my colleague Richard Riddick in Greenwich for over a year now, with great success. The big gift is the camera, but the stocking stuffer that's sure to please is understanding it. Our one-day tuitions can be purchased as a gift voucher for £195. Call or pop into the gallery for more information. ●

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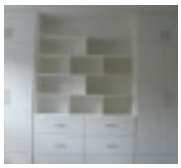
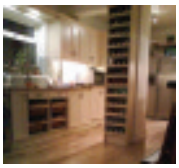

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MOMENTS OF GREATNESS

The Great British Photograph online competition (www.greatbritishlife.co.uk) inspired many thousands to get snapping. Here is the final shortlist for London, with introductions from the photographers who are now in with a chance of winning the ultimate prize!

HAMPTON COURT GARDENS
WILL VOELKER
It was my first visit to Hampton Court Gardens and it was in the middle of a long dry spell during the summer of 2010 – everything around Greater London was so dry, brown and yellow, so I was not anticipating capturing any photographic gems that day. As I was venturing about the palace, I stepped off the beaten path to poke my head through some hedges and see what lay beyond them, and to my pure delight and bewilderment was this breathtaking view of the gardens and the palace as well.

UPSIDE DOWN WORLD
HELEN JONES
I came across this reflection accidently while attempting to photograph a heron at the pond in front of the Crystal Palace park concert bowl. Trying to capture the elusive heron was proving difficult from the angle I was at. As I looked down at the water in some despair, this amazing reflection appeared, just as the clouds broke. I rotated the picture to create the illusion of all is not as it seems, requiring the viewer to look again.

REMEMBRANCE
RON TEAR
My wife and I visit London on numerous occasions to take images. On this occasion I wanted to see the memorial to 7/7 and found it a very moving tribute. I took several images of the structure, concentrating on the place names, when I was taken by this scarf. This was more a photojournalistic image charged with emotion. It is a tribute to those who lost their lives on this infamous day and a powerful one too. As a photographer I felt this has to be seen as a reminder that our world is not as safe as we think.

SWAN
SUDEEP LAL
This picture was taken during a business trip to London in November 09. This was a particularly bright sunny afternoon and I decided to take a walk through the Hyde Park. I came across this swan while leaning against the lake railing watching them feed on bread crumbs, busy grooming her plumage. The water was absolutely still and dark – quite a contrast to the swan's body. I thought it was so natural and beautiful.

BRITISH MUSEUM
RAKESH SHELAR
One weekend I visited one of the great attractions of London, The British Museum. I like the dram of light and shadows of the museum roof top with morning sunlight passing through the roof.

CANAL LIFE
PAMELA MILLAR
Canal Life is a view of colourful houseboats moored against a contrasting backdrop of formal townhouses along a tree lined stretch of the Grand Union Canal in London. A chinzy jug of summer flowers, deckchairs and a Stanley tool box speak of the pride in maintaining this picturesque floating community. The artistic effects emphasis this much coveted quirky and bohemian floating lifestyle.

TREE IN RICHMOND PARK
JONATHAN LANE
I particularly like Richmond Park because it is only about ten miles from the centre of London, but it feels like the countryside. In early 2009 I went to take photos in the snow, it was overcast for the whole day except for about five minutes when I took this image. It was simply a case of being in the right place at the right time.

NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL
KATRINA REJDOVA
I was wandering through the crush of the Notting Hill Carnival and suddenly these policemen caught my eye. I loved the contrast between 'the tough guys' and the delicate bubbles. When I first came over here, people used to warn me about the Carnival – the crush, the crime – and the image of the policemen and the bubbles just seemed such a contrast to that.

STONE BRIDGE AT THE JAPANESE GARDEN
MARCOS ARRIETA GARCIA
The occasion was a cultural celebration at the Japanese Garden in White City. While exploring the fountain, I was captivated by the simplicity of the small bridge surrounded by vegetation. Another special feature was the unusual copper shades in the water. It is a peaceful retreat.

SPIRIT OF BRIXTON
EMILY MARTIN
This image was a rather spontaneously taken shot. The scene caught my eye because I thought it showed the urban side of south London pretty well, due to the graffiti-styled skatepark, showing the hardness of the area but at the same time the strong social cohesion of the youth living there.

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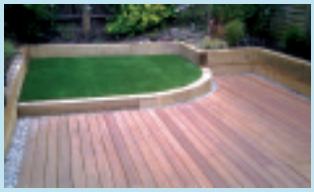

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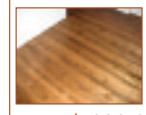
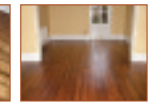

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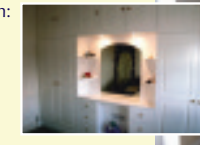

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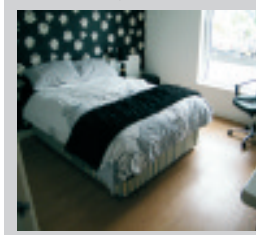

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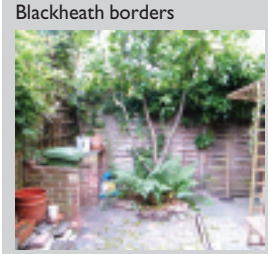

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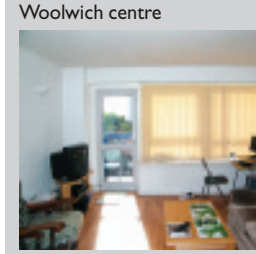

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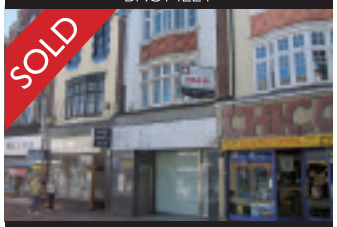

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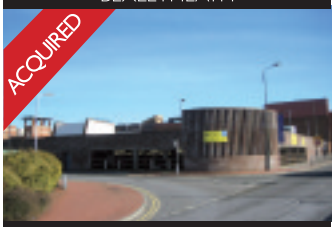

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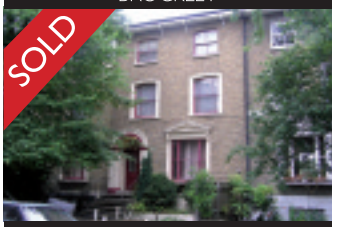

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Beckenham BR3 **£1,750,000 F/H**

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Chislehurst BR7 **£1,575,000 F/H**

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Lettings

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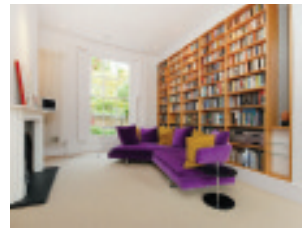

Hyde Vale SE10 £1.85 million F/H

A high quality architect designed renovation in the West Greenwich Conservation Area, comprising 4 bedrooms, splendid drawing room, kitchen and dining room, reception/library, media room, two storey conservatory and terraced garden.

Royal Hill SE10 GUIDE PRICE £610,000 F/H

A 2 bedroom period house in the West Greenwich Conservation Area, comprising 2 double bedrooms, 2 receptions, large bathroom, kitchen leading onto a south-east facing garden. Potential to convert the lower ground floor room subject to necessary consents.

Brand Street SE10 £639,950 F/H

West Greenwich Conservation Area - A 2 bedroom, 3 storey Victorian house with a Greenwich Woodworks kitchen, 15ft conservatory with limestone flooring and direct access to a south facing garden.

Devonshire Drive SE10 TO LET £3700 pcm

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Oakcroft Road SE13 TO LET £4500 pcm

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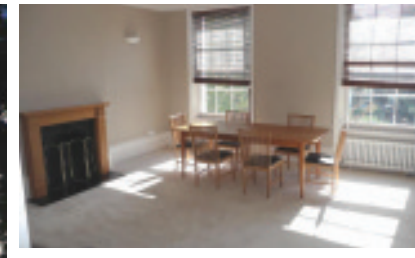

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WIDMORE ROAD, BR1 - £800PCM

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A spacious first floor flat on 2 levels over a fashion boutique. 2 Double bedrooms, large sitting room and separate kitchen. Available immediately and just a few minutes walk from Shortlands BR.

MERA DRIVE, DA7 - £800PCM

An immaculate and high specification ground floor maisonette. The property is laid with wood laminate flooring throughout and painted white. French doors leading to a communal garden, but also a private paved garden to rear. Close to Barnehurst BR station and Bexleyheath town centre.

SHORTLANDS ROAD, BR2 - £169,995

Second floor flat located in Cartmel Court. Double bedroom, fitted kitchen, economy 7 heating, well maintained communal rear garden and grounds, garage en-bloc. This flat is very spacious and ideally located for all Shortlands/Bromley amenities and mainline BR stations. No onward chain, ideal investment opportunity.

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Agent *Speaks*

Since the buy-to-let market is still outstripping the stock market and any savers rates on offer, Capital Estate Agent's **Rob Tancred** offers wise words to potential buy-to-let landlords

Rob Tancred

So, you have a few spare pennies in the bank and the rate of return is not much better than keeping it under your mattress. Is the buy-to-let (BTL) market going to work for you? Let's look at what you actually want from your investment. Do you require your investment to make a quick buck? If so, BTL is probably not the best thing for you. If you are looking for a good solid return on your money over a five-year spread, and can wait for the market to rise again to achieve Capital appreciation, then carry on reading!

Research into what rents fast, what kind of tenant you want and the need for property in the area. It is no use buying a property that won't rent in the two weeks of advertising, so take advice from letting agents as to what the market is doing locally, and what is the most sought-after property to rent

'Location, location, location' is a massive part of having the correct formula when investing in buy-to-let. Look at the proximity of the property to a train station, ideally look at one of the stations with fast links to London. Of course, you may have to pay a bit more to get the best location, but you tend to find you get the best rates and the property is easier to rent. I often get asked, 'what size property should I buy?' The best answer is what sort of money do you have to spend and are you looking to buy one or two properties or put all your money into one project? A one-bed flat rents easy, but a three-bed house is always sought after. Take a look at www.rightmove.co.uk and see what is available in the area you have chosen, what sort of rents are being achieved and how many similar properties are available. If there are too many, then move area!

When debating furnished versus unfurnished, I would go for unfurnished with a fully fitted kitchen, including all white goods. For someone to move out of a furnished property, they can normally get their belongings in the back of a car, to move out of an unfurnished flat it takes a van at least, so you tend to find people stay longer in unfurnished properties because of the hassle of moving. Also if you need to carry out some decoration work, keep it plain and simple. For flooring, wood laminate is a good idea, with plain carpets in bedrooms and lino to the bathroom.

Don't forgot the letting agent is going to want about 10% or so of the income generated from renting out your property. You also have, on leasehold properties, ground rent and service charges. Remember at all times to make sure you have buildings insurance cover in place and they are aware of your intention to rent.

Rent guarantee insurance is a must! It insures the tenant against non-payment of rent, comes with full eviction and legal expense cover and is, in my job, the best thing since sliced bread!

At Capital we offer a free service that gives advice on where to buy, advice on any works required, buy-to-let financial advice from our independent mortgage advisor; and advice from our accountant (the initial consultation is free). I have 21 years' experience in the buy-to-let market and, my company being one of the major forces in the Bexley and Bromley letting and management field, I know we have the answers to your questions. So if you are fed up of receiving little return on your money, or if you are looking to put a property into your pension policy, speak to us for free. ●

Rob Tancred has three offices covering lettings and buy-to-let: Capital Bromley (020 8313 0010), Capital Sidcup (020 8309 0888) and Capital @ David Lloyd (020 8300 9555). Rob also runs free buy-to-let seminars. For more information, email rob@capitaldl.com

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Spacious Family Home

Chevening Road, SE10 **F/H**
Guide Price: £625,000 - £645,000
A spacious four bedroom family home located near Halstow Primary School, featuring four double bedrooms, double reception room, and a large kitchen/diner.

Impressive Duplex Penthouse Apartment

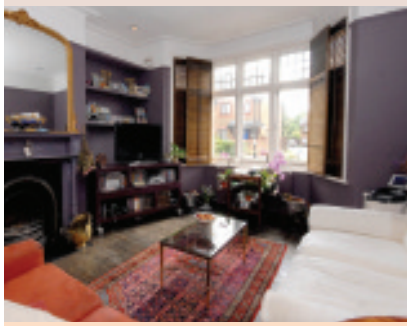
Greenwich Millenium Village, SE10 **L/H**
Guide Price: £575,000 - £600,000
An impressive duplex penthouse apartment featuring double height arched ceilings, large windows with far reaching water and parkland views, porterage and underground parking.

Something Very Special

Park Vista, SE10 **F/H**
Guide Price: £1,225,000
A fantastic piece of history set on the verges of Greenwich Royal Park. Offering a unique array of living accommodation including five bedrooms.

BLACKHEATH VILLAGE 23 Tranquil Vale, Blackheath, London SE3 0BU. blackheath.village@fjlord.co.uk **020 8852 9522** Until 10pm weekdays

Grand 3 Bed Terrace



Morden Hill, SE13 **F/H**
Guide Price: £500,000 - £550,000
A grand three double bedroom mid terrace house with off street parking on a quiet residential street near both the Heath and Lewisham Station.

One Bed Near Heath

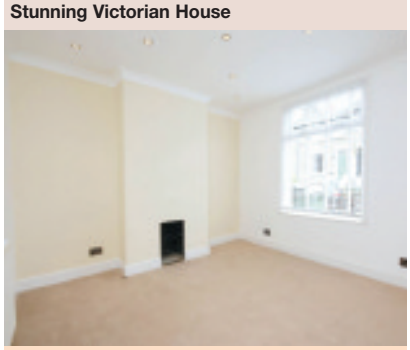
Kidbrooke Grove, SE3 **L/H**
Guide Price: £187,500 - £199,950
A stylish one double bedroom apartment with shared garden and off street parking converted from an elegant period residence on a quiet residential street near the Heath.

Fabulous Five Bed

Slaithwaite Road, SE13 **£835,000 F/H**
A magnificent five bedroom, three reception detached residence arranged over 2858 square feet with a sunny South West facing garden and gated off street parking for three cars, located on a quiet residential street.

BLACKHEATH STANDARD 7 Stratheden Parade, Blackheath, London SE3 7SX. blackheath.standard@fjlord.co.uk **020 8293 1143** Until 10pm weekdays

Stunning Victorian House



Reynolds Place, SE3 **£349,950 F/H**
A stunning recently refurbished mid-terraced three bedroom Victorian house. Finished to a high standard with a well maintained garden to rear and no onward chain.

1930's Semi-Detached House

Canberra Road, SE7 **F/H**
Guide Price: £400,000 - £425,000
Overlooking the grounds of Charlton House and neighbouring pleasant parkland is this larger than average four bedroom 1930's semi-detached house.

Stunning Grade II Listed

Cadogan Road, SE18 **£325,000 L/H**
Within a private gated compound occupying the corner of this stunning Grade II listed building is this two double bedroom conversion boasting a range of original features and allocated parking.

Free, accurate valuations. In-depth market knowledge. Expert negotiation. Residential Sales and Lettings

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Sales

Point Hill, Greenwich, SE10

A spectacular and unique detached family home occupying an elevated position in a sought after road in West Greenwich. The accommodation is particularly well planned and spacious and comprises galleried entrance hall, reception room, kitchen/dining room, cloakroom, utility room, further reception room, master bedroom with en-suite shower room and dressing room, four further bedrooms, two further stunning bathrooms, off road parking and landscaped gardens. Conveniently located for access to Greenwich main line and DLR stations, and the shops, bars and restaurants of central Greenwich are all close by.

£1,495,000

Cedars Close, Blackheath, SE3

Forming part of this magnificent mansion house with extensive communal grounds comes this hall and lower ground floor apartment. The accommodation offers a huge lounge over looking the grounds a modern fitted kitchen on the hall floor and on the lower floor comes two double bedrooms and a large modern bathroom. Other features include your own entrance and an allocated parking space. Properties of this calibre are extremely rare and in this market represent a real find.

£595,000

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- Two Bathrooms
- Barrel Roofed Ceilings on Top Floor
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- Available Mid-November

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Top Floor apartment in prestigous heath side period mansion. Huge living & bedroom.

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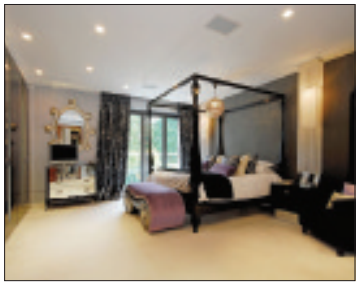
Moving times

This month's finest local properties for sale and to let



Parkgate SE3

The private Cator Estate in Blackheath Village is an exceptional location, with Parkgate being one of the most desirable roads on the estate. It offers privacy and peace, yet is still within half a mile of Blackheath station, providing the best of both worlds. The interior design of the property is contemporary, luxurious and unmatched anywhere on the estate. Arranged over four levels it comprises four spacious bedroom suites, a superb entertaining space with air-conditioned games room/cinema, a study, family room, kitchen/breakfast room and wine store, as well as a dramatic drawing room that features a double-height vaulted ceiling and library. High-tech features include a 24-hour monitored camera and alarm system and Linn multi-room music system.

£3,250,000 from Unique on 020 8378 1222

Tyers Gate SE1

Set over three floors of a converted warehouse, this unique loft apartment is an extremely stylish property. The upper level is packed with character and has exposed brickwork, beams and lots of natural light. It has a large entertaining space, open-plan kitchen and a smaller room for an office or storage. The lower level houses two bedrooms. The apartment is also located by Bermondsey Street, which boasts a cool collection of boutiques bars and restaurants.

£1,395,000 from Stirling Ackroyd on 020 7940 3888

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Areas covered: SE3, SE8, SE10, SE13, SE18, E14

Southbrook Road SE12

This large Victorian semi-detached house comes in at a very reasonable price for the highly popular Lee Conservation Area. The current owners have renovated the property to an impressive standard, retaining many period features, including sash windows and tiled fireplaces. It comprises four bedrooms, three reception rooms, two bathrooms, driveway parking and a modern fitted kitchen. The property also benefits from off-street parking, a ground-floor WC and a fantastic 115ft south-facing garden.

£850,000 from John Payne on 020 8852 8633

Cumberland Place SE6

The Prime development on Cumberland Place SE6 is perfect for first-time buyers. Choose from studio, one and two bedroom apartments, each stylishly furnished with carpeted floors, fitted wardrobes and stainless steel kitchen appliances by Symphony. Owners have access to landscaped communal gardens and an allocated parking space. Higgins Homes offers a Step Up scheme that allows buyers to take advantage of up to a 20% equity deposit as a rent and interest-free equity loan for up to 10 years.

Prices start at £99,950 from Higgins Homes on 01273 355 111

Blackheath Park SE3

This four bedroom, two bathroom detached freehold house is perfect for a family wishing to upsize. Not only is it big and spacious but it also has planning permission to add an extra floor, which could serve as a lavish master bedroom or large playroom. The bright, triple-aspect reception room has sliding patio doors out to the south-facing garden and a further casement out to the courtyard. Situated in the heart of the Cator Estate, the property also boasts a garage and off-street parking.

£1,000,000 from Kershaws on 020 8297 2922

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Turner Lane Estate Agents

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You'll also win:

- A one-day demonstration day for two at the Tante Marie School of Cookery, Woking, Surrey
- Four VIP tickets to The France Show, with access to a wine tasting seminar and lunch in the Mon Plaisir restaurant at the show

Your chef, Andrew Maxwell, has cooked in some of the world's leading restaurants, including the three Michelin starred Restaurant Gordon Ramsay and Australia's 2000 Restaurant of the Year, MG Garage. He is now the one of the owners and principal of the internationally acclaimed Tante Marie School of Cookery, co-owned by Gordon Ramsay and Lyndy Redding.

Your wine expert and sommelier will be Andrew Bennett, wine buyer at the award-winning, French wine specialists 3D Wines.

Runner up prizes

Two runners up will also receive:

- A one-day demonstration day at Tante Marie School of Cookery for two people
- A 12-bottle case of exclusively crafted wines and a one-year vineyard partnership to 3D Wines' Sancerre domaine, with membership benefits.
- Four tickets to The France Show.

To enter the competition

Simply answer the following question:

What is a TOQUE?

A) a fish dish B) a chef's hat C) a cooking pot

Enter online at www.greatbritishlife.co.uk by 5th January 2011

TANTE MARIE

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Tante Marie has been training the world's top chef's for over 50 years and runs some of the most highly rated Cordon Bleu courses for professional and amateur chefs in the UK, all based on the classical French culinary techniques. For more information visit www.tantemarie.co.uk

3D Wines

3D WINES

3D Wines is no ordinary wine club. They rent rows of vines to 'Partners' who don't just enjoy drinking the wine, but who also have the fun of visiting the vineyard either individually on a weekend break or touring holiday, where they get to know the winemaker and can check on the evolution of their wine from grape to glass. For more information visit www.3dwines.com

Terms and conditions: Fine dining dinner to be taken no later than 31st July 2011 and date to be agreed subject to availability of Andrew Maxwell. Dinner party must be hosted within mainland UK, including Isle of Wight. Food to be selected and sourced by Andrew Maxwell. Wines to be selected and sourced by 3D Wines. Demonstration days can be selected from those offered by Tante Marie School of Cookery and must be taken by 31st July 2011. No cash alternative is offered. No purchase necessary. For full terms and condition visit www.greatbritishlife.co.uk

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Readers can buy two tickets to The France Show (14-16 January) for just £12* simply quote AC6 when booking at www.thefranceshow.com or on 0844 8718817

*Tickets normally cost £13 on the door. For more information visit www.thefranceshow.com. Calls cost 10p per minute from BT landlines, mobile networks may vary.

Tel: 020 8463 9955
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Breakspears Road SE4 **£1,495,000 Freehold**

A truly stunning double fronted period house arranged over 4 floors with 6 bedrooms (4 ensuite), 3 reception rooms and 5 bathrooms. Fabulous landscaped front & rear gardens & off street parking, Located this prime Brockley conservation area with easy access to two main train lines and two much sought after secondary schools Prendergast and Haberdashers' Aske's. The property has been refurbished to an exceptional standard retaining many original features and an integrated Sonos sound system. There is under floor heating on the hall & lower ground floors & in all the luxury bathrooms & shower rooms.

heath ESTATES

Lewisham Hill SE13 **£385,000 Freehold**

A charming 2/3 double bedroom split level Victorian conversion flat located in a popular residential area on the borders of Blackheath & Lewisham, approx 5 min's walk away from Lewisham BR & DLR. Large lounge with feature fire place and beautiful spiral staircase leading to third bedroom, fully fitted kitchen with integrated appliances, modern bathroom with shower facility sep w/c. Full gas central heating, period features, video entry phone.

Dinsdale Road SE3 **£2,000pcm**

A beautifully presented three/four bedroom period family house arranged over three floors. Situated in a sought after area within walking distance of Maze Hill Station and Greenwich Park. Pretty garden and OSP.

Trafalgar Grove SE10 **£1450pcm**

A stunning 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom Duplex apartment in one of the most sought after areas in Greenwich, a few minute's walk away from Maze Hill BR Station, Greenwich Park, the River and Greenwich Village.

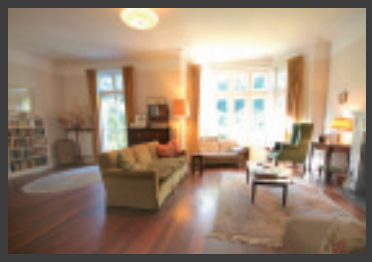
Church Terrace SE13 **£2000pcm**

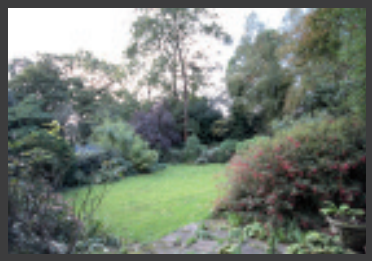
Stunning 2/3 bedroom top floor conversion with fabulous open plan living area and spiral staircase to mezzanine level. Located in much sought after 'Church Terrace' just a short walk from Blackheath village.

St German Place SE3 **£1400pcm**

A delightful two double bedroom split level apartment overlooking the open heath and within a few minutes' walk of Blackheath Village and BR Station. Balcony, enormous communal gardens to rear and OSP .

THE CLOSE, BLACKHEATH, SE3



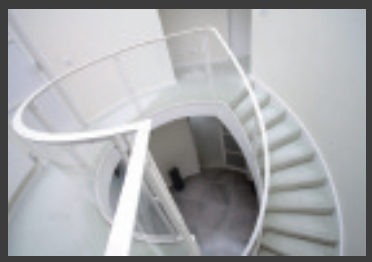


Guide Price £1,400,000 Freehold

Built circa 1877 by eminent engineer John Penn for his daughter, this is an exceptional five bedroom property which occupies a quiet position on this little-known tree-lined no-through-road. Situated in Heath Lane, the property is conveniently placed close to the heath and equidistant to Blackheath Village and Lewisham mainline and DLR station. Internally the property offers many original features and requires some modernisation.

Blackheath Village Office - 020 8318 1311

FOXES DALE, BLACKHEATH, SE3



Price £1,750,000 Freehold

Four bedroom detached contemporary house situated on the private Cator Estate a short walk from Blackheath Village and heath with its mainline station to the City and West End. Features include a circular atrium staircase, integrated Bang & Olufsen sound system, air conditioned bedrooms, high quality kitchen and bathrooms, attractive low maintenance gardens with water feature and lighting. Chain free.

Blackheath Village Office - 020 8318 1311

Blackheath Village Branch
1 Montpelier Vale
Blackheath, SE3 0TA
Tel: 020 8318 1311

Greenwich Branch
227 Greenwich High Road
Greenwich, SE10 8NB
Tel: 020 8858 9911

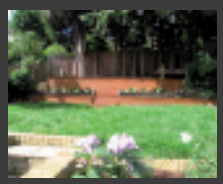
Westcombe Park Branch
11 Stratheden Parade
Westcombe Park, SE3 7SX
Tel: 020 8858 6101

Lee Branch
119 Burnt Ash Road
Lee, SE12 8RA
Tel: 020 8852 8633

Lettings Branch
39 Montpelier Vale
Blackheath, SE3 0TJ
Tel: 020 8318 0243

Commercial Branch
7 Hare & Billet Road
Blackheath, SE3 0RB
Tel: 020 8852 6125

EMBLETON ROAD, SE13



Price £550,000 Freehold

Set in the delightful Ladywell Village Conservation Area, this well maintained four bedroom semi detached home is arranged over 3 storeys and benefits from a conservatory, cellarage and a large family bathroom.

Lee Office - 020 8852 8633

CHARLTON LANE, SE7

Price £575,000 Freehold

A halls adjoining 3 storey 4 bedroom Victorian semi detached house retaining plenty of period character and imaginatively extended to the rear. Within easy walking distance of Charlton station, Maryon Wilson Park, Charlton Park & Charlton Village.

Westcombe Park Office - 020 8858 6101

We'd like to wish all our clients, contacts and local residents, a happy & safe holiday season, and a prosperous new year in 2011.

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John Payne

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